The Relationship Between Infant-Family Routines, Number of Caregivers and Infant Basal Cortisol

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Greater number of caregivers is marginally associated with lower basal cortisol levels in infants

### Table 1. Linear Regression Predicting Cortisol Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>95% CI</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>[-0.06, 0.05]</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routines (^{b})</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>[-0.01, 0.01]</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td>0.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple Caregivers (^{c})</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>[-0.16, 0.01]</td>
<td>-1.76</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routines X Multiple Caregivers</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>[-0.02, 0.02]</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{a}\) Cortisol levels were measured in μg/dl and then regressed on time of day. The unstandardized residuals were used for analysis.; \(^{b}\) Routines was mean-centered; \(^{c}\) Multiple Caregivers was coded as 0 = No, 1 = Yes

### RESULTS

- A linear regression where cortisol was predicted by routines and number of caregivers (one vs. multiple) was conducted, see Table 1.
- There was a marginally significant effect of number of caregivers (see Figure 1) and all other effects were non-significant.

### DISCUSSION

- It was expected that adherence to family routines would act as a protective factor against adverse effects resulting from home instability in the form of the number of caregivers and elevated cortisol levels.
- Contrary to hypothesis, adherence to household routines does not moderate the relationship between number of caregivers and cortisol levels in infants.
- Instead, the greater number of caregivers infants had the lower their cortisol levels were.
- Findings suggest that number of caregivers may be a protective factor against infant stress.

### REFERENCES


### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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